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THE

WELCH HEIRESS,

A
COMEDY.

London:

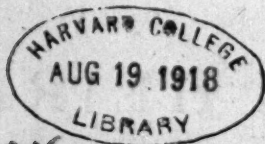
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TO THE
EARL OF HARCOURT.

As I have attempted to write a Comedy at the flattering instigation of your Lordship, the following scenes have a natural claim to your protection. If, when you prompted and encouraged me to court the Comic Muse, you had imparted to me at the same time some share of your instinctive penetration into character--- of your elegant, but impressive ridicule of fashionable levities---had you consigned to my hand the clue that guides you in the chace and detection of folly through the intricate windings of her labyrinth, I should have presented to you a Comedy more worthy of your attention. Such as it is, it offers me an opportunity of publicly acknowledging the high value I set upon a friendship, which I have had the happiness of enjoying so many years.

I have the honor to be,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

EDWARD JERNINGHAM.

PROLOGUE
TO THE
WELCH HEIRESS.

WRITTEN BY JOHN TAYLOR, ESQ.

Spoken by Mr. Barrymore.

“SHOOT Folly as it flies.” Such is the game,
At which, ’tis said, the Comic Muse should aim;
The darker passions that the heart deform,
And spread o’er groaning states the moral storm,
Are pompous themes the sportive Maid resigns,
To swell her solemn Sister’s lofty lines.
Yet when she fain would strike such tow’ring prey,
The serious Damsel takes the safest way;
Tho’ proud yet prudent---wounding guilt too high,
To wake in you the self-reproaching sigh;
In sluggish apathy you careless sit,
Nor smart for crimes that you could ne’er commit:
But, in the comic province, who shall dare
To touch the faults that you may haply share?
For conscience then may strengthen the appeal,
And bid you crush what forces her to feel.

For Virtue, zealous and disdainful awe,
E’en fear’d by those too mighty for the law,
The Stage, through ev’ry station, Vice has try’d,
And honest Satire has her lash applied.

Hence,

P R O L O G U E.

Hence, while the Comic Muse must fear to wound,
She still is doom'd to course o'er beaten ground;
Again bring forward what too well you know,
Or, if a novelty, some monster shew.

To-night our Bard, who long has struck the lyre,
A modest minstrel of the plaintive choir,
Attempts for once a harmless laugh to raise,
More dreading censure than presuming praise.
One point we fairly in his cause may plead---
For know, he dares to touch the scribbling breed;
Dares strip from dull conceit its bold pretence,
And prove an Author may be void of sense.
Then let your candour countenance the grace
That freely owns the follies of his race;
And sure our Bard e'en Malice need not fear,
(Could Malice lurk in specious ambush *here*)
E'en she may yield her pittance of applause
To him whose vent'rous pen a brother draws;
For while thus sportive on a scribbling elf,
Our simple Poet may deride himself.

*The following Lines, written by the Rev. Mr.
PRITCHARD, Jun. before he knew the
Author was in possession of another Pro-
logue, contain too much Merit to be sup-
pressed.*

THERE liv'd at Argos once a youth of fame,
(So Horace tells) and Lycas was his name,
Who, (if there is a joy which mad men know,
And such as madness only can bestow)
By the strong force of its prevailing pow'r,
Wak'd to fresh transport ev'ry new-born hour.
Each visionary scene that fancy drew,
His mind embodied, and confirm'd it true.
Oft, in the height of his distemper's rage,
He saw, or fancy'd that he saw, a stage;
Where as he heard the self-imagin'd sound,
And trod, or thought he trod, dramatic ground;
Where, with nice skill in imitative art,
Each son of Thespis seem'd to play his part,
The fond conceit drew down his loud applause,
As tho' reality had been the cause,
And ev'ry member, head, hands, lips, and eyes,
Profess'd their praise, and testified surprize.

If such the charm where fancy gave delight,
Let truth, not fiction, plead our cause to-night;
And,

P R O L O G U E.

And, as I come to take a nearer view,
Pleading for him who strives to please you,
Oh! may propitious Beauty* smile reward!
May Science † favour, and the Gods ‡ regard!

Sons of renown, the bards of ancient days,
Wore on their heads a circling crown of bays,
These bloom eternal, for to them belong
The grace, the pride, the energies of song;
The tale well-told, the animated line,
The glow of sentiment, and thought divine;
Yet still there blossoms many a virgin flow'r,
On the fair spot where Genius rears her bow'r;
Of these our bard presents before your view,
One of a simple, but unfully'd hue;
Should the mild off'ring kind acceptance share,
Tis your's to weave the crown, and his to wear.

* To the Boxes.

† To the Pit.

‡ To the Galleries.

CHARACTERS.

LORD MELCOURT MR. PALMER.

MR. FASHION - MR. BARRYMORE.

SIR PEPPER PLIN- }
LIMMON } MR. DODD.

MR. PHRENSY - MR. BANNISTER, JUN.

MR. FANCY - - MR. R. PALMER.

LADY BELLAIR - MISS FARREN.

LADY PLINLIMMON MISS POPE.

MISS PLINLIMMON MRS. JORDAN.

SCENE---MELCOURT-HALL, near Town.

THE

WELCH HEIRESS,

A COMEDY.

ACT I.

Enter Lady BELLAIR---Mr. FASHION.

Mr. FASHION.

I AM happy at your Ladyship's arrival. We expected you last night.

Lady Bellair. I purposely avoided coming last night, that I might not be complicated in the embarrassment of the Welch family's arrival, whom I understand came yesterday. What sort of creatures are they? How many did the caravan consist of? I expect to see the whole race of Shenkin.

Mr. Fash. Do not be alarmed as to their number; I will give your Ladyship a list of the *dramatis personæ*, and a faint sketch of their characters.

Lady B. Pray do! for I have seen nobody, not even my brother, the *padrone della casa*.

Mr. Fash. Lord Melcourt, I know, is walked out; I was just enquiring after him. But to return to the subject;---Yesterday evening, the family coach, covered with dust, and much damaged by the toil and length of the journey, waddled up to

the hall-door in great labour, and was happily delivered of Sir Pepper Plinlimmon, Lady Plinlimmon, Miss Plinlimmon, and a *femme de chambre*; two servants attended on Welch ponies. The coach, I must inform you, contained originally five persons, but it miscarried on the road of Mr. Taffey, their chaplain, who could not bear the inside of a carriage. He is, however, expected tomorrow, in the basket of some stage-coach.

Lady B. I fancy we shall be able to do without Mr. Taffey.

Mr. Fash. Indeed you are mistaken. He is one of the essential personages in our drama, for he is to join the hands of Lord Melcourt and Miss Plinlimmon.

Lady B. What sort of a thing is the girl?

Mr. Fash. She is very well as to beauty; her shape elegantly and harmoniously formed, but when in motion, ungraceful. Her mind is a compound of ignorance and information, like the waving branches that give a chequered kind of light. She made us laugh last night at supper with the childish simplicity of her questions, and sometimes she excited our admiration at the quickness of her repartee, and the solidity of her judgment; in a word, she appears to be an inspired idiot.

Lady B. Now let me have the portrait of Sir Pepper.

Mr. Fash. Sir Pepper is a plain, unassuming man, subject at times to a warmth of temper, and whose local train of impoverished ideas are quite unsuitable to the scene he is now entering upon, and to the company with which he is now to associate. His mind has received a peculiar bias respecting the prophecies that have been floating of late, and he is almost convinced the world will be at an end before his daughter has brought Lord Melcourt a son and heir.

Lady

Lady B. I confess, I like the whimsicallity of that notion ; it will serve to amuse us.

Mr. Fash. As for Lady Plinlimmon, she has a considerable share of vanity ; half of which she spends in admiration of her daughter-in-law, the other she consumes upon herself. She imagines she has a refined taste for literature, that she is a supreme judge of painting, and---

Lady B. Oh ! then she is intolerable.

Mr. Fash. By no means. There is a broad good-humour about her which makes her inoffensive. She looks with impatience for the honour of cementing an acquaintance with your Ladyship.

Lady B. I think, from your description, it will not be unentertaining to pass a day or two with these Welch Emigrants. But does my brother seem happy at his approaching nuptials ?

Mr. Fash. Yesterday he seemed at first overcome by the invasion of these Vandals ; but his native mirth rallied, and at the close of the evening he was himself again. But here he comes.

Enter Lord MELCOURT.

Lord Mel. Sister, you are welcome ! You look in high beauty. The elegant circles in town will be eclipsed without you. Have you seen our new kindred ?

Lady B. Not yet. Mr. Fashion has been giving me a slight sketch of them.

Lord Mel. Well, I am ready to consign Sir Pepper, and Lady Plinlimmon to the full discharge of your raillery ; but spare, I intreat you, my shepherdess of the Alps.

Lady B. Never fear ; never fear.

Lord Mel. Lady Plinlimmon looks for your arrival with all the flutter of anxious expectation. Your fame, like an artful prologue, has smoothed
the

the way to a kind reception : she talks of you as the paragon of excellence ; she will study your whole person ; observe every motion, attitude, and every article of your dress.

Mr. Fash. Lady Bellair may be said to be a capital picture from the gallery of fashion, for Lady Plinlimmon to copy.

Lady B. I will venture to say, without the impeachment of vanity, that the copy will not come up to the merit of the original.

Mr. Fash. Your Ladyship is perfectly right.

Lady B. But tell me, brother, don't you feel, independent of the charms of your young bride, an uncommon elasticity of mind in the removal of the incumbrances which this marriage will effect ?

Lord Mel. Yes. Upon that ground I plant the standard of my gaudiest streamer. I have had a private conference with Sir Pepper, and his immediate relinquishing of his Brecknockshire estate will enable me to part with my Irish acres, and satisfy all my noisy claimants ; who, like a voracious pack of hounds, have chaced me from hill to dale, and notwithstanding the windings of excuses, and the intricate mazes of delay, would have soon overtaken me, had not this golden shower from the Welch mountains put an end to the chace.

Lady B. Bravo ! Are we to expect any more company ?

Lord Mel. I have invited my friend Fancy, the miniature-painter. I expect also Phrensy, the poet, whom you have often heard me talk of ; he will suit Lady Plinlimmon, and their mutual eccentricities will divert us.

Mr. Fash. I am glad that oddity will be added to the group ; you have frequently amused me with anecdotes concerning him. When will he be here ?

Lord Mel. I expect him every minute. He writes word he will be here to-day, but begs his coming

coming may be a secret; and, as he is not personally known to any body but myself, he desires to assume the name of Tombstone.

Mr. Fash. What a whim! What can he mean?

Lord M. Most likely he is afraid of his creditors---however, do not betray him to the rest of our society. But here come our Welch relatives, (*Enter Sir PEPPER PLINLIMMON, Lady PLINLIMMON, and Miss PLINLIMMON.*) Give me leave to present Lady Bellair, to your Ladyship.

Lady Plin. Independent of the connection that is taking place between our families, I rejoice at the opportunity that now offers of commencing an acquaintance with Lady Bellair.

Lady B. Your Ladyship does me a great deal of honour. I hope Sir Pepper, you will like this part of the world sufficiently to engage you to stay among us some time.

Lady Plin. What ease! What elegance! (*Aside.*

Sir P. Plin. I should wish to enjoy your Ladyship's society, but I am rather disposed to return as soon as I can; for if, as Nostradamus says, we are in the fifth act I should like to be at home when the curtain drops.

Lady Plin. Dear Sir Pepper, do not cloud the splendour of Lady Bellair's mind, with the dark mists of your odious prophecies.

Lady B. I beg your Ladyship will let Sir Pepper say what he chooses, I am not easily alarmed: credulity is not my foible. But this is a conversation of too severe a cast for our young bride: you, my dear, may send your expecting eye through a long and gay perspective.

Miss P. So I do! I expect to have fine cloaths, to go to a great many balls, and I expect to be married!

Sir P. Plin. Your Ladyship will excuse the wild simplicity of my daughter.

Lady B.

Lady B. Oh! I am a great admirer of artless simplicity; it is as rare to be met with as sincerity.

Lady Plin. When she has exchanged the rude breezes of the mountain where she was bred, for the gentler gales of polished society, she will assimilate with the soft elegance of her new situation.

Mr. Fash. Lady Bellair herself could not have invented a metaphor more happily allusive.

Sir P. Plin. My wife is very metaphoricall.

Miss Plin. Yes! we all have our different *calls*; mamma is metaphoricall---papa is propheticall---I am comicall---the old curate, near Plinlimmon Castle, is classicall, and his wife is dropscall!

Lady Plin. You must check this careless volubility.

Lord Mel. Suppose, gentlemen, we leave the ladies to confer by themselves. Will you allow me, Sir Pepper, to shew you the Vandyke I mentioned last night?

Sir P. Plin. If you please.

(*Exeunt Sir PEPPER, Mr. FASHION, Lord MELCOURT.*)

Lady Plin. I should wish your Ladyship not to be impressed with an idea that my daughter-in-law is deficient in the great outline of education, though she has not yet received the last touchings of embellishment. I myself have been her tutors, and have read to her several of the best English authors.

Miss Plin. And all the Welch poets.

Lady B. I am persuaded Miss Plinlimmon is deficient in nothing that is absolutely requisite for the station she is going to ascend: as for those delicate finishings, that fashionable elegance demands---

Lady Plin. Your Ladyship's society will supply. I consign this young Alpine plant to your care: 'tis yours to give the pliant branches their proper direction, and to breathe on them a playful air of easy negligence. With your permission, I will now
with-

withdraw for the purpose of my girls imbibing from your Ladyship those nameless graces you only can bestow. *(Exit Lady PLINLIMMON.)*

Miss Plin. What are those things mamma says you are to bestow upon me?

Lady B. My friendship! And you in return must have some friendship for me, and speak to me with confidence upon every point that relates to your marriage with my brother. By what he has said to me, I find he is extremely attached to you: I hope his attachment will meet with an equal return on your part.

Miss Plin. That is as it may be.

Lady B. I am sure Lord Melcourt is reckoned by all the ladies very handsome, amiable, entertaining, and ---

Miss Plin. I know all that, and I should be very partial to him, if ---

Lady B. If what, my dear?

Miss Plin. If---

Lady B. Has he done any thing to offend you?

Miss Plin. No! but he has done nothing to please me.

Lady B. Does he appear to neglect you? I recollect he was uncommonly assiduous in writing to you last winter.

Miss Plin. Oh yes! he frequently wrote to me, and he used to say in his letters, that when I should come to Melcourt Hall, we should wander through the groves together, and he would say such tender things to me by the river-side. Now we were by the river-side yesterday evening, and scarce one word did he say to me, but conversed with my papa about the winding of his river; egad! I wish it was wound round his neck.

Lady B. Fie, child! You must not imagine that Lord Melcourt's attention is to be totally devoted to you.

Miss

Miss Plin. Am I then not to expect any share of his conversation? Is there to be no time for wooing? no flirtation? no whispering? no toying? no innocent anticipation?

Lady B. Miss Plinlimmon, the manufacturing of love in Wales may perhaps be as coarse as a sackcloth, but in this part of the world, the cupids of fashion weave the fine texture with a light and invisible hand.

Miss Plin. Invisible indeed! But if I am never to partake of his company, what am I come here for? what shall I be the better for being married to him? where is the advantage?

Lady B. You will obtain the advantage of his name and title; you will move in a higher sphere.

Miss Plin. But I always understood, that wedlock was a kind of travelling through life together?

Lady B. So it is, but then it is like travelling in the double stage-coach; you go the same journey together, without seeing or incommoding one another.

Miss Plin. I hate the double stage-coach; I like a vis-a-vis much better. However, if Lord Melcourt does not become more assiduous, he may be supplanted---Fashion is much more attentive.

Enter Lord MELCOURT.

Lord Mel. I ask pardon for interrupting you; but the odd character I spoke of is arrived; he begs to see me in private; he is now coming.

Lady B. We will retire immediately.

(Exeunt Lady BELLAIR and Miss PLINLIMMON.)

Enter

Enter servant---announces Mr. TOMBSTONE.---

Enter Mr. PHRENSY.

Mr. Pbrensy. Your servant---I am obliged to you for your invitation---I have an epithalamium for the occasion; shall I read it?

Lord Mel. All in good time: tell me first why you assume another name?

Mr. Pbrensy. You shall hear, but do not betray me.

Lord Mel. You may rely upon me.

Mr. Pbrensy. Shall not I read the epithalamium first?

Lord Mel. No, no! I am impatient for your history?

Mr. Pbrensy. Well, you shall hear it---but I am certain you will be pleased with the epithalamium.

Lord Mel. I have no doubt, but let me know the secret motive of your changing your name, before we are interrupted.

Mr. Pbrensy. Do you think your servants will know me?

Lord Mel. I have an entire new set.

Mr. Pbrensy. That makes me happy.

Lord Mel. Was it the fear of your creditors?

Mr. Pbrensy. No such terrestrial motive urged me to assume another name: this liberty I have taken with myself flows from a more sublime cause, than the apprehension of bailiffs! I will now disclose the mystery---unless you choose to hear the epithalamium first---

Lord Mel. Do not trifle any longer, but let me know the purport of this mysterious conduct.

Mr. Pbrensy. Envy, which attends living authors, has pursued me with great implacability.

Lord Mel. I do not recollect that I ever heard your works censured.

Mr. Phrensy. Likely enough---censure would have excited notice---notice would have led to observation---observation to justice---justice to admiration---no no! Envy, my Lord took another method with me, she some how or other, contrived to breathe over me and my works a dread repose. The warehouse where my productions are deposited, resembles a family vault where all my numerous progeny are at rest! And are only distinguished from one another by labels---such as Phrensy's comedies--Phrensy's tragedies--Phrensy's satires---Phrensy's ---

Lord Mel. But what has all this to do with the changing of your name?

Mr. Phrensy. I am now coming to the mark: my friends have soothed me with the idea, that posterity will do me justice---that posterity will say to these sleepers, arise! Then will my comedies, my tragedies, my odes, shake off their dust and dazzle the admiring world.

Lord Mel. What is all this to the purpose?

Mr. Phrensy. You shall hear---instead of patiently waiting the natural process of time, I conceived a stratagem of anticipating my triumphs, and of taking a short cut to posterity.

Lord Mel. How do you mean---by cutting your throat?

Mr. Phrensy. 'Tis done, 'tis done---

Lord Mel. What's done?

Mr. Phrensy. I have killed myself; that is to say I have given out that I am dead. This is the reason for changing my name---envy was never played such a trick before---

Lord Mel. But why take the melancholy name of Tombstone?

Mr. Phrensy. That is to keep me in recollection that I am dead.

Lord

Lord Mel. There is sense in that.

Mr. Phrensy. But this stratagem, my Lord, has not yet answered my sanguine expectation.

Lord Mel. How so?

Mr. Phrensy. I have been three weeks dead, and would you believe that there has not been in any of the papers, an elegy, a posthumous puff, or a line in my commendation.

Lord Mel. That is very strange.

Mr. Phrensy. Egad! A tallow-chandler might have slipped out of the world, as easily as I have done.

Lord Mel. How did you insert your death in the papers, for it escaped my notice.

Mr. Phrensy. Simply thus---yesterday died, universally lamented, the eminent poet, Classical Phrensy, Esq.

Lord Mel. To be sure, nothing could be more simple and modest---but I have an idea, that I think will serve your scheme better---I will have it inserted in the papers, and you shall draw up the paragraph, to this purpose---yesterday the eminent poet, Classical Phrensy, Esq. died suddenly, at Melcourt-Hall, where he was upon a visit to his friend, Lord Melcourt.

Mr. Phrensy. Very good---excellent conception.

Lord Mel. The circumstance of making your exit at my country-house, during the interesting moment of my nuptials, will give your death an eclat.

Mr. Phrensy. This second edition of my death, with additions, will do admirably faith, but what will your company say, when they shall read the paragraph?

Lord Mel. I shall take particular care, that none of them shall see it.

Mr. Pbrensy. But what does your Lordship smile at?

Lord Mel. Another idea occurs, which will serve to enrich the paragraph---

Mr. Pbrensy. As how?

Lord Mel. Fancy, the miniature-painter, will be here to day---I shall tell him as a profound secret that you lie dead in the house, and that it is unknown to the company---and I will beg of him, as you are my friend, to take a faint sketch of you---

Mr. Pbrensy. This will, as your Lordship says, enrich the paragraph, which may run thus---Mr. Phrensy being the intimate friend of Lord Melcourt, an eminent painter from town was sent for, to take a likeness of the great poet.

Lord Mel. Admirable! You have only to whiten your face, and make yourself like a ghost in an opera, the painter shall only peep at you, and then finish the sketch from memory---trust to my contrivance, you shall not be detected.

Mr. Pbrensy. I will go and prepare the paragraph. (*Pbrensy going, returns*) your Lordship then does not wish to hear the epithalamium first?

Lord Mel. No, no! I expect the painter every minute. (*Exit Mr. PHRENSY.*) Self conceit---good humour---with absurdity, are happily blended in that man's composition.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Mr. Fancy is arrived---

Lord Mel. Bid him come in---

Enter

Enter Mr. FANCY.

Mr. Fancy. I wish your Lordship joy, I flatter myself you have not sent for me, to be an idle spectator---I hope I shall have the honor of drawing the bride.

Lord Mel. Most assuredly---the art suffers when you are idle.

Mr. Fancy. Have you assembled many of your friends upon this occasion?

Lord Mel. No---Lady Bellair is come, and Mr. Fashion, and a literary acquaintance of mine, Mr. Tombstone.

Mr. Fancy. I never heard of his name.

Lord Mel. He has lived a great deal abroad, he is lately returned from Africa; I had another ingenious man here, and he was my particular friend, but a sudden death has deprived me of that invaluable person: what I am going to relate, is a secret, nobody is acquainted with the terrible accident, except a confidential servant. Poor Phrensy, the poet, died suddenly last night; he is now in the house, and is to be removed this evening: I should be happy to have a resemblance of my old friend, and if you would have the goodness to take a hasty sketch of him, you would infinitely oblige me.

Mr. Fancy. I can have no objection.

Lord Mel. Let all this transaction be as secret as the grave.

Mr. Fancy. You may depend upon me.

Enter Mr. PHRENSY, with a paper.

Mr. Phrensy. Here is the paragraph for your inspection.

Lord

Lord Mel. (*taking the paper*) I shall look at it another time. Let me have the satisfaction of introducing two gentlemen to one another, who are formed for each other's acquaintance; Mr. Tombstone, let me present you to Mr. Fancy. I must now beg permission to leave you together; I shall return in a few moments. (*Exit Lord MELCOURT.*)

Mr. Fancy. I am happy in commencing an acquaintance with so ingenious a gentleman. I should be proud to draw your portrait.

Mr. Phrensy. (*Smiling*) You shall, Mr. Fancy. I suppose the bride is to be embellished by your pencil?

Mr. Fancy. Of course. But Lord Melcourt did not send for me merely to paint the young lady.

Mr. Phrensy. Your pencil will undoubtedly run through the whole family.

Mr. Fancy. Likely enough. But I have another meaning. I am sent for---I am sure Mr. Tombstone may be trusted; and as the first fruits of my friendship for you, I will deposit in your breast a profound secret.

Mr. Phrensy. I will in return communicate to you, the first secret that is whispered in my ear.

Mr. Fancy. I have, then, to inform you, that there is a person lies dead in the house, and Lord Melcourt has begged I would just catch a resemblance of his departed friend.

Mr. Phrensy. Who is it?

Mr. Fancy. Phrensy, the poet!

Mr. Phrensy. Indeed! Is that great and unrivalled man no more?

Mr. Fancy. You are too magnificent in the epithets you apply to Mr. Phrensy.

Mr. Phrensy. By no means! Reflect what an awful task is now imposed upon you! Methinks I see

see you advance, with sublime emotion, towards the honoured couch that bears the breathless image of that immortal man!

Mr. Fancy. But whence this enthusiasm? After all it must be confessed, that the friendship of Lord Melcourt was the highest feather in his cap.

Mr. Phrensy. Talk not to me of feather, or of cap! His head was encircled with laurel, wove by the public hand! For shame Mr. Fancy, is it thus you revere the illustrious dead?

Mr. Fancy. Don't be so warm, Mr. Tombstone, I am perhaps a little ungenerous in speaking against the dead who cannot defend themselves: but tell me dispassionately, do you admire poor Phrensy's writings?

Mr. Phrensy. I do! I know them by heart, have you a mind to hear the sixteenth scene of his tragi-comedy, in six acts, where the princess catches her.---

Mr. Fancy. No, no! I will not give you the trouble of repeating your friend's verses.

Mr. Phrensy. My friend's verses! you say right, yes my intimate friend; he never wrote a line without consulting me.

Mr. Fancy. But if he was so dear a friend, how comes it you are not more affected by his death?

Mr. Phrensy. I am astonished, stunned, bewildered at the dreadful secret you disclosed! When the first impression is subsided, grief will succeed: Lord Melcourt out of affection for me secreted the melancholy event, but I begin to feel myself overpowered. *(goes aside with his handkerchief to his eyes.)*

Enter Lord MELCOURT.

Lord Mel. What is the matter with Mr. Tombstone?

Mr.

Mr. Fancy. Inadvertantly I informed him of the death of Mr. Phrensy, not knowing the intimacy that subsisted between them.

Lord Mel. How could you be so imprudent? (*goes up to Mr. Phrensy*) Dear Tombstone, do not yield to this inordinate affliction.

Mr. Phrensy. How can I command my grief? (*throws his arms round Lord Melcourt's neck.*)

Lord Mel. I take no inconsiderable share in your distress.

Mr. Phrensy. Undoubtedly you do, in losing Mr. Phrensy, you lose your panegyrist---think how often he has regaled your Lordship with the thickest cream of dedication.

Lord Mel. Forbear to remind me, you affect me too much.

Mr. Fancy. What a situation I am in! I thought I was invited to the abode of festivity, instead of which, I am come into the house of mourning; I had better return to town.

Lord Mel. By no means! When this mutual sympathetic emotion is over, we shall return to our former mirth.

Mr. Fancy. Your Lordship appeared very easy and jocund just now.

Lord Mel. You then saw me during the intervals of the first and second paroxysm of grief.

Mr. Fancy. Is then your Lordship's affliction methodised into acts like a play, with pauses between the divisions.

Lord Mel. Indeed Mr. Fancy, this is not a moment for raillery, let me entreat you to leave us, we shall be more composed presently.

Mr. Fancy. Well, I will obey your commands! (*Exit.*)

Lord MELCOURT and Mr. PHRENSY burst into laughing.

Lord

Lord Mel. We shall have still more entertainment with the painter, when he has drawn your picture.

Mr. Phrensy. I am impatient for that scene, I will go and prepare myself.

Lord Mel. My valet de chambre, who has my instructions, and who is in our confidence will assist and furnish you with whatever is necessary for the purpose, I must now join the company.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

D

ACT II.

A C T II.

Lord MELCOURT---*Mr. FANCY, with a pallet in his hand---a couch at some distance, on which Mr. PHRENSY lies, disguised as dead.*

Lord Mel. Shall we now approach the venerable remains of the great man.

Mr. Fancy. Give me leave to mingle my colours a little.

Lord Mel. I am afraid the task I have imposed upon you, is unpleasant: you feel, I make no doubt, very disagreeable sensations upon this occasion.

Mr. Fancy. Not in the least, a lifeless frame does not impress me with any disturbance; I drew Lady Fidget's dead monkey the other day without any kind of perturbation.

Lord Mel. But, Mr. Fancy, do you make no distinction between Lady Fidget's dead monkey, and the remains of my friend?

Mr. Fancy. As he was your friend, I respect him, but does your Lordship really think he is worthy of those encomiums, that you and Mr. Tombstone, so profusely bestowed upon him?

Lord Mel. My partiality may perhaps cast a little suffusion over my judgment. But tell me, do you

you not venerate his memory? Do you not admire his works?

Mr. Fancy. Perhaps as much as your Lordship, 'tis impossible with so refined an understanding as yours to receive any entertainment from his writings; the characters in his plays, for example, may be compared to the incongruities that we meet with on sign-posts: things that never existed in nature, such as blue boars, black swans, dragons, and mermaids---I never felt a more pleasing invitation to a slumber, than I did at his last comedy, which unfortunately I did not enjoy long, for I was roused by a thousand cat-calls.

(Mr. PHRENSY starts up from the couch.)

Mr. Phrensy. 'Tis false, 'tis false, no cat-call was heard at my comedy, though I am dead, I am not damned---

Mr. Fancy. *(Recovering from his fright)* I perceive it was a trick.

Mr. Phrensy. Trick or no trick, my works will live when the memory of Lady Fidget, her monkey and yourself, will be swept from the face of the earth---base calumniator---

Lord Mel. I beg I may be the negociator of peace between the living and the dead; in the first place I can assure Mr. Fancy no indignity was meant to him---Mr. Phrensy, for particular reasons, having given out that he was dead, I thought a portrait of the author, by a celebrated painter, would add lustre to the posthumous edition of his works.

Mr. Fancy. Then I forgive him. *(Runs to embrace him.)*

Mr. Phrensy. But tell me first, how can I forgive the scurrilous observations you so liberally bestowed upon my compositions?

Lord Mel. Dear Phrensy, you do not imagine that the painter was in earnest---flatter him a little
(*aside to Fancy.*

Mr. Fancy. I hope I am not so destitute of taste. So far from sleeping at your comedy, I disturbed the boxes with my peals of laughter.

Mr. Phrensy. Give me your hand.

Mr. Fancy. Then the parts were so chequered with sentimental and pathetic passages.

Mr. Phrensy. Excuse me, there was nothing pathetic in my comedy, nor any thing like sentiment.

Mr. Fancy. I only mean in the winding up of your comedy, where the butcher's daughter kneels.

Mr. Phrensy. My dear Sir, you are speaking of my tragedy.

Lord Mel. Phrensy, you must excuse him---Fancy's mind has not yet recovered from the confusion, your sudden bursting from the dead occasioned! You had better retire and relapse into Tombstone.

Mr. Phrensy. I will follow your direction---and as you, Mr. Fancy, are acquainted with my secret history---let us for the future be friends.

(*Exit Mr. PHRENSY.*

Mr. Fancy. Now we are alone---I must declare you was rather too hard upon me, in exposing me as you did to the indignation of the enraged poet---

Lord Mel. I only intended a little innocent sport, I did not think he would have rushed upon us so rudely, it was his irritability in hearing himself abused, that made him rise from the dead.

Mr. Fancy. Then it was my own doing, for the abuse was all mine. I must now prepare to draw the living; the ladies I believe, are now waiting for me.

Lord

Lord Mel. I will follow you---

(*Exit Mr. FANCY.*)

Enter Mr. FASHION.

Lord Mel. I wish, Fashion, you had been here sometime ago---we had an excellent scene between the painter and the dead poet---the painter was almost in an hysteric.

Mr. Fashion. I think these two characters will afford us still more entertainment.

Lord Mel. I hope so---for I want something to draw off my attention, and to prevent me from fixing too steady an eye upon this bride of mine, I shall be ashamed to introduce her among my acquaintance next winter.

Mr. Fash. Do not be under any apprehension, the instructions of Lady Bellair, Mrs. Townlife, and Lady Angelica Worthless, will refine the rude simplicity of your wild mountain-girl.

Lord Mel. Though I have a high opinion of those able modern professors, I am inclined to think this Welch girl will baffle all their skill, she will never through them, as through filtering stones, divest herself of the heterogeneous matter, the heavy particles, the nauseous lees she has imbibed from her country education, from the manners of Sir Pepper, and from the vulgarity of the mother-in-law---no, no, 'tis impossible---

Mr. Fash. I ask your pardon---when she has been decanted off into polished society she will leave the dregs behind.

Lord Mel. I wish it may be so---I must now look for the painter, who is going to draw the portrait of my bride elect.

Mr. Fash. I will not detain you.

(*Exeunt*)

SCENE

SCENE---*The Saloon. Lady Plinlimmon, Miss Plinlimmon.*

Lady Plin. I beg you will put on your best looks and sit patiently to the painter, that Lord Melcourt may have a good resemblance of you.

Miss Plin. What does he want my picture for? will he not see me morning, noon, and night? 'tis not likely he should forget my face: or is it to hang me in effigy, in case I should run away from him?

Lady Plin. It is usual for the bride to present her portrait to the bridegroom, so I beg you will make no difficulty about it.

Enter Lord MELCOURT and Mr. FANCY.

Mr. Fancy. I hope I do not intrude upon your Ladyship?

Lady Plin. By no means.

Mr. Fancy. This is the hour your Ladyship appointed, and I confess I am impatient to commence the flattering task, but to do justice to the charms of that young lady, no pencil can have the presumption.

Miss Plin. The painter, I find, mamma, says finer things than the lover.

Lord Mel. It is part of his profession to talk the language of bombast, and inordinate adulation: It becomes my situation to shew respect, a delicate reserve, a genuine but not an importunate attachment, a calm not a tempestuous solicitude; in one word, a silent adoration.

Miss Plin. Silent enough! egad I believe your adoration has a lock jaw.

Lady Plin. Fie child! don't talk so ridiculously; pray Mr. Fancy in what costume shall my daughter be drawn?

Mr. Fancy. Perhaps Miss Plinlimmon will point out herself what character she prefers.

Miss Plin. I hope Mr. Fancy will give my
face

face a good character, for it has done no harm.

Mr. Fancy. I ask your pardon, it has done a great deal of harm ; but if my opinion was consulted, I should recommend to Miss Plinlimmon to be painted in the attitude of reading.

Miss Plin. I should like to be drawn reading, for I know I have a pretty down-cast look

Lady Plin. I must not forget to inform you that all the females of the Plinlimmon's have had a family mole, a little above the left eye, for these two centuries : Now Isabella's is too complicated with the eye-brow ; perchance you can make some slight alteration.

Mr. Fancy. By the omnipotence of the pencil we can raise the beauty spot, and place it in view.

Lord Mel. But is not that departing from reality ? is it not a deceit ? a kind of pencil lie ?

Mr. Fancy. It is only changing the local resemblance, it is at the worst a skilful and elegant inaccuracy ; the beauty-spot is there, I make no addition to what nature has already done, I only bring to the eye of admiration, what her Ladyship informs me nature has rather removed from the sight.

Lady Plin. I declare Mr. Fancy, you defend yourself most ingeniously, does he not my Lord ?

Lord Mel. Most skilfully indeed !

Mr. Fancy. I have taken a much greater licence than this, without feeling any reproach of conscience ; for example, when I had the honor of drawing Lady Frizlerump, I broke the immeasurable length of her bald buff forehead, by introducing two moles and a patch, the patch you know is a thing ad libitum, and as I knew Lady Frizlerump had a mole on each shoulder, I removed them from their native spot, (they were well worth the carriage) and I placed them in a more conspicuous situation ; there is no great deceit in this, it is only
a kind

a kind of transplanting, which ought to be as allowable in painting as in gardening.

Lord Mel. Well ladies, you perceive how sportfully Mr. Fancy discoursés, he has a mind to give you a specimen of his manner of entertaining his company, when they are sitting to him.

Lady Plin. But I think, before we come to any determination about the dress, it would be proper to consult the attic taste of Lady Bellair.

Mr. Fancy. Most assuredly, you may shew her these miniatures which I have lately finished. This is the portrait of Miss Harelip, (*gives the miniatures*) which attracted the public eye the last exhibition. This is only a profile of Miss Woolfack, the Judge's daughter.

Lady Plin. I will not detain you any longer at present.

M. Fancy. I will wait upon your Ladyship, whenever you will favour me with your commands.

(*Exit Mr. FANCY.*)

Miss Plin. But why does your Lordship wish so much to have my picture, since I am to live with you? do you want me duplicated? don't you think one Miss Plinlimmon will be enough for you?

Lord Melcourt. The mutual exchange of pictures, is one of the etiquettes of modern marriages.

Lady Plin. Marriage itself may be said to be a mutual exchange of attention, Indulgence, and affection.

Miss Plin. In this mutual exchange, pray my Lord, inform me which of us two will be the gainer?

Lord Mel. If there is any calculation to be made, I am undoubtedly the gainer.

Miss Plin. give me leave to calculate my losses; in marrying your Lordship I lose my name---I lose the society of papa and mamma---I shall perhaps, lose my shape---and perhaps, in time, lose my reputation.

Lady

Lady Plin. Peace to that flippant tongue of yours, you are trying his Lordship's patience before the time. A I must carry these miniatures to Lady Bellair, your Lordship will excuse my leaving you---Isabella go to your papa---

(Exeunt Lady PLINLIMMON and Miss PLINLIMMON.)

Lord Mel. Heaven and earth! What a family am I going to be connected with! But I must not pause upon that thought, it would almost lead me to distraction.

(Exit Lord MELCOURT.)

SCENE---*Lady BELLAIR's Apartment.*

Lady BELLAIR---Lady PLINLIMMON.

Lady Bell. Here is a miniature of myself, which was drawn when I was married, I think the dress would suit Miss Plinlimmon.

Lady Plin. *(Taking the miniature.)* 'Tis beautiful, nor could it be otherwise, while it presumed to have any resemblance of your Ladyship---but you just now mentioned your marriage, I know that you and Lord Bellair were separated not long after; interested as I am in whatever relates to your Ladyship, do not imagine it is mere curiosity that solicits some illustration upon that point.

Lady Bell. I am ready to give you every information, and the more so, as ill-nature, that monotonous and dull commentator, may have construed our separation in her invariable manner.

Lady Plin. I am all attention.

Lady Bell. Lord Bellair, somewhat advanced in years, palled, and satiated with the pleasures of the town, began to meditate a retreat; but before he retired into the country, from which he was never

to return, he ranged through all the gay scenes of public resort, to find a youthful associate, to accompany him in his retirement.

Lady Plin. Your mysterious history begins to unfold itself; the beauteous flower that flourished in the bright sunshine of admiration, grew pale and cheerless when it was transplanted to the solitary gloom of the country.

Lady B. I must confess your Ladyship's extemporary apologue comprises my little story, and makes my continuation unnecessary.

Lady Plin. Not at all---I beg you will continue your interesting narrative.

Lady B. Lord Bellair, amidst the innumerable beauties, that at once attracted and bewildered his choice, threw at length his selecting glance upon me.

Lady Plin. His choice did honor to his taste.

Lady B. It did not however contribute to his happiness---the single voice of my reluctance was lost in the chorus of approbation that resounded from all my relations and friends---I then summoned all the fortitude I was capable of, and took a courageous leave of the town---adieu, I cried, to the flattery of men---to the pleasing envy of the women---adieu to balls---adieu to the delight of charioteering in a phaeton through St. James's Street every morning---adieu to the easy instructions of the town, to the contemplation of manners in caricature-shops, to the reading of Shakespear upon canvass, and to the study of the English history upon walls---the fatal hour arrived---the carriage was at the door---

Lady Plin. You really excite my compassion! What ensued when you reached the ancient family seat?

Lady B. Say rather the family vault!--I wrapt myself up in my resignation, as in a winding sheet, and thought to have buried myself in a husband---
the

the fates decreed otherwise: I broke forth from the ponderous marble, beneath which I was quietly inurned, and am come again to reside among the living.

Lady Plin. The world is a considerable gainer by enjoying you once more. Fortunate was the storm that blew such a flower upon the lap of society. But whence arose that storm? Did it arise from Lord Bellair's ill-temper? however, I am not curious; indeed I can partly guess: the solitude of the country, faintly chequered by the visits of the apothecary, and the vicar's wife; his Lordship's fulsome fondness---his odious approaches---

Lady B. My dear Lady Plinlimmon, you are going on so rapidly! It is of no use to reckon the slight imperceptible threads of discontent, which grew at length into a cable. Behold me restored to independence, sufficiently affluent, and almost as happy as a widow.

Lady Plin. May nothing interrupt the happiness you possess, and which you deserve! Before I had the honour of your acquaintance, I heard your merits highly extolled.

Lady B. I am exceedingly obliged to those persons who have smoothed my path to your Ladyship's partiality. But to whom am I indebted?

Lady Plin. The persons I allude to are friends of your Ladyship, and are neighbours of our's in Wales; they were in town last winter: I mean Mrs. Vandal and her sister.

Lady B. Yes! I recollect those old tapestry figures. But you must not imagine there was any intimacy between us! I endured them at my toilet. They may be reckoned, if you please, among my morning friends, but you may be sure I never acknowledged the creatures in an evening.

Lady Plin. That is charming! I shall acquire
under

under your auspices the fashionable discriminations. The morning and evening friend is a happy distinction. But I fear I am trespassing upon your time.

(Offering to go.)

Lady B. I will wait upon you immediately. With your permission, I will send to the company to assemble in your book-room, where we will fix upon the plan of this evening's amusement.

(Exit Lady PLINLIMMON.)

SCENE.---*Book-Room.*

Enter Lord MELCOURT---Mr. PHRENSY.

Lord Mel. We will wait till Lady Plinlimmon comes, as she wishes extremely to commence a literary acquaintance with you.

Mr. Phrensy. She is comely, faith! I do not dislike her person.

Lord Mel. She is the Ruben's style.

Mr. Phrensy. I hear her coming.

Enter Lady PLINLIMMON.

Lady Plin. I hope, gentlemen, you have not been here long. I feel myself peculiarly distinguished in the desire I understand you expressed of forming an acquaintance with me. A man of your talents is not to be met with in every house.

(Mr. PHRENSY bows very low.)

Lord Mel. That bow says more than a pompous train of words.

Lady Plin. I am not insensible to its eloquence; it flatters me as much as a dedication. Pray, sir, are you engaged in any work at present?

Mr. Phrensy. I am only superintending a new edition

edition of the works of a dear friend, whom I have lately lost---the immortal Classcal Phrensy !

Lord Mel. While Mr. Tombstone is expatiating on the merits of his departed friend, I will call upon Sir Pepper, and return in a few minutes.

Lady Plin. Pray do! and bring Sir Pepper, and Isabella along with you; the company is to rendezvous here. (*Exit Lord MELCOURT.*) Indeed, sir, it is very amiable in you to suppress the effusions of your own powers, to attend to the interest of another.

Mr. Phrensy. It is not so much attending to the interest of my friend, as it is consulting the interest of the nation, while I am preparing this noble edition of his works for the general delight.

Lady Plin. But I have been so unfortunate as never to hear of Phrensy's name.

Mr. Phrensy. What! never heard of Classcal Phrensy, Esq.?

Lady Plin. No! I protest I never heard his name till you pronounced it.

Mr. Phrensy. Let me tell you, Lady Plinlimmon, if the rays of his genius have not pierced the dense atmosphere of Wales, that envelops your mountains---

Lady Plin. Mr. Tombstone, you alarm me! I had no idea of degrading your friend. I will promote the subscription among all my acquaintance, and do every thing in my power to atone for my seeming disrespect.

Mr. Phrensy. I am calm again: but you will excuse a little warmth in favour of a person who is as dear to me as myself. We were inseparable; we never differed upon the smallest point; if one spoke, the other listened; if one slept, the other nodded.

Lady Plin. Ah! such a friendship is seldom to be found. I can assure you, sir, the warmth that
just

just now broke from you has only served to exalt me in your esteem; and, as a proof of what I am saying, I beg I may lay the corner-stone of our acquaintance with this little brilliant.

(Gives him a ring.)

Mr. Pbrensy. This generosity subdues me.

Lady Plin. Let the ring be as a passport to this apartment at all times. And when you are at leisure, I should wish to take some lessons of botany under your direction. Lord Melcourt informs me, that every science is within the range of your mind.

Mr. Pbrensy. I shall be happy in obeying your commands.

Lady Plin. You think, sir, that botany is a proper occupation for a female mind?

Mr. Pbrensy. Nothing so proper. Give me leave to cite a couplet, composed by my lamented friend, applicable to this subject. It is a happy couplet; he sent it to Lady Nightshade, who is well versed in the loves of the plants; it runs thus:

Delightful emblem of her softer power,
A woman's proper study is a flower.

Lady Plin. Exquisite couplet! What a great man your friend was!

Mr. Pbrensy. The confidence you place in me; this little twinkling monitor of your kindness; your affability; every thing prompts, inclines, urges, commands, compels me to undeceive you.

Lady Plin. To undeceive me? What can you mean, Mr. Tombstone?

Mr. Pbrensy. I am not Mr. Tombstone; it is an assumed name; a veil to cover me for certain purposes.

Lady Plin. What purposes? Who are you?

Mr. Pbrensy. Bursting from my concealment,
like

like Æneas from his cloud, know that I am Classical Phrensy! 'Tis Phrensy speaks! 'tis Phrensy kneels! 'tis Phrensy's lips now touch this hand!

Lady Plin. I did really imagine you was some great personage in disguise. But explain the mystery of all this.

Mr. Phrensy. Envy, and her train have of late carried on so atrocious a war against me, that I have been persuaded to sham a retreat, and give out that I am dead.

Lady Plin. Excellent idea!

Mr. Phrensy. In the mean time, I am collecting subscriptions, and shall return triumphantly to life, under the cover of a superb edition of all my works.

Lady Plin. I comprehend you perfectly, and am delighted with the confidence you repose in me.

Mr. Phrensy. The family, Mr. Fashion, the painter, who is my particular friend, are the only persons in the world who are intrusted with this literary secret.

Lady Plin. I shall be as silent as Helicon.

Mr. Phrensy. The Heliconian stream is apt to babble; it would be more accurate to say, as silent as Lethe.

Enter Sir PEPPER, Miss PLINLIMMON, Lord MELCOURT, and Mr. FASHION.

Lady Plin. This is the gentleman, Sir Pepper, whom Lord Melcourt speaks so highly of.

Sir P. Plin. I am Mr. Tombstone's most obedient. My wife is fond of literature; you will find her versed in some of the best authors. She is fond of conversing with the dead; or, to speak more properly, with the living dead.

Mr.

Mr. Phrensy. Her Ladyship was conversing with the living dead when you entered.

Lady Plin. And I must add, a favourite author.

Sir P. Plin. Is your Lordship determined to set out for Ireland as soon as the ceremony is over?

Lord Mel. The reason that compels me to leave you so soon is the business I have there, which demands immediate dispatch.

Sir P. Plin. I am surprised Mr. Conscience, the lawyer, is not yet come with the writings.

Lord Mel. He will certainly be here today.

Miss Plin. What matters, whether or no the lawyer comes? I wish poor Taffey, we left on the road was arrived, for it is the parson who speaks the prologue to Love's play.

Mr. Fash. Aptly observed! but the nuptial play, Miss Plinlimmon, is sometimes a tragi-comedy! the dialogue frequently uncouth, vehement, and boisterous, What do you think your's will be?

Miss Plin. Oh! our's will be a gay farce of three acts.

Enter Lady BELLAIR.

Lady B. Now we are all assembled, let the master of the ceremonies instruct us what we are to do.

Lord Mel. The carriages are at the door; suppose we take an airing through the park, and lounge at the different buildings.

Lady B. Let me be mistress of the revels for this evening. We will imagine the phaetons are triumphal cars, and they shall convey us to the temple of Mars, where Mr. Tombstone shall read to the company his new translation of the Battle of the Frogs.

Lady

Lady Plin. Excellent! I love analogy.

Lady B. And as your Ladyship is fond of analogy, we will take some whipt syllabub in the pavilion of friendship, and regale ourselves with ice-creams in the temple of Hymen.

Mr. Fash. A little severe, I think.

Lord Mel. "Where more is meant than meets the ear." (*Offering his hand to Miss PLINLIMMON.*

(*Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE---*The Temple of Hymen. The Company eating Ice-Creams.*

Sir PEPPER PLINLIMMON, Miss PLINLIMMON, Lord MELCOURT, Mr. FASHION and Lady BELLAIR.

Sir P. Plin. I think, my Lord, this Temple of Hymen, the most beautiful building in your park?

Mr. Fash. This ice is excellent!

Miss Plin. Cold food for the Temple of Hymen---

Mr. Fash. 'Tis not the only food!

Miss Plin. You mean bread and cheese, and kisses.

Lord Mel. I beg, Lady Bellair, you will check your cicisbeo, Mr. Fashion, and not let him libertinise with my Diana.

Lady B. What pretence can I have to restrain him? Fashion is like the air; a chartered libertine, free to play with every flower.

Miss Plin. Egad he shan't play with me tho'!

Lady B. Tell me, my dear, why did your mamma leave us so abruptly?

Miss

Miss Plin. Mamma, I fancy has had enough of the Temple of Hymen.

Sir P. Plin. Your Ladyship perceives this spoiled child, has the liberty of saying what she pleases. My wife is gone with her ingenious friend, to study botany.

Lady B. I should be sorry to constrain her Ladyship.

Sir P. Plin. Be so good as to inform me, who fancied these decorations? Are they indebted to the hand of any foreign artist?

Lord Mel. There is no occasion to apply to foreign auxiliaries, for the purposes of elegant art---the native growth of our soil, amply supplies the demands of taste in every department.

Sir P. Plin. This relieve, is happily executed! come here, Isabella, you understand mythology. Here is hymen, attended by a group of cupids? Do you conceive the allegoric meaning of the artist?

Miss Plin. Perfectly! Here is Hymen, with a torch in his hand, that is, I suppose to light the bride and bridegroom home. And the dear little cupids I suppose, foretell the children.

Sir P. Plin. Ridiculous! You pervert every thing by your distorted applications! But explain the remainder---you see night personated following Hymen, she throws o'er her frame a mantle studded with stars, and among the stars, appears a crescent---

Miss Plin. The mantle studded with stars, designates the holy stillness and unruffled union of the marriage state.

Sir P. Plin. Very well indeed.

Miss Plin. And the crescent denotes the honeymoon---

Sir P. Plin. There you relapse into your absurdity---

Mr.

Mr. Fash. Miss Plinlimmon will perhaps do me the honor to explain this compartment--- here is Hymen, binding a shepherd and a shepherdess with a chain of flowers.

Miss Plin. It is your turn now, you shall explain this---

Mr. Fash. Upon my word, I think this a most excellent allegory, and illustrates well the short triumph of matrimony---the chain of roses is easily broken, and the roses soon fade.

Lord Mel. Fashion speaks the language of an inveterate batchelor, yet every thing in nature condemns his sarcasm: the birds, that make this grove re-echo with their harmony, what are all their songs, but so many hymns in honor of the married state.

Mr. Fash. I ask your pardon, Lord Melcourt. The economy of your grove, will not assist your argument, in defence of Hymen, for every feathered couple who were so happy the last spring are now divorced, and all the harmony and love, which now reign in your woods is the result of separation and of new engagements.

Lord Mel. Truce to your licentious insinuations; to purify the temple that has been so profaned, I entreat Miss Plinlimmon to favor us with the song in honor of Hymen, with which she enchanted the company last night---

Miss Plin. I am ready to comply with your request.

Sir P. Plin. With your Ladyship's permission, I will go and look for the botanists.

Lady B. He is positively jealous (*aside.*)---Indeed Sir Pepper, you must not go, till you have heard the song.

Sir P. Plin. I am all obedience.

The SONG, by Miss PLINLIMMON.

I.

Oh young affection's glowing train
By mutual fond endearment won!
At Hymen's altar claim the chain
That twines two willing hearts in one!

II.

Have ye not seen in Flora's bower,
Two roses on one stem respire?
So form'd by passion's blending power,
Two hearts are thron'd on one desire.

Sir P. Plin. I presume, I have now your Ladyship's leave to wait upon the botanists.

Mr. Fash. Sir Pepper, you will only interrupt the scholar, in the study of nature---the eminent professor, under whom Lady Plinlimmon is now acquiring a new science, would wish not to be deranged.

Sir P. Plin. Very likely---nevertheless, I shall make them a visit.

Lady B. We will accompany you to the house.

(Exeunt omnes)

SCENE

SCENE---Book-Room.

Lady PLINLIMMON and Mr. PHRENSY, at a table covered with plants and flowers.

Lady Plin. What a wonderful system have you brought me acquainted with? I never could have conceived there were such astonishing things in nature, as male and female flowers---

Mr. Pbrensy. I have most assuredly, let your Ladyship a little into Flora's secrets.

Lady Plin. Male and female flowers! I am petrified! But tell me, learned professor, when the flowers are at a distance from one another, how they communicate their mutual passion?

Mr. Pbrensy. Their nature interposes her happiest stratagem! She calls her western gales, her amorous zephyrs, and they on their fragrant wings convey the lovers to each other.

Lady Plin. Now, Sir, as you have led me, as it were, behind the curtain into Flora's green-room, I confess, I am not much edified at the morals of the plants? Indeed the flowers appear to be an abandoned profligate race---here is a honey suckle, which you say contains five males, and only one female---this modest snow-drop, you tell me, has six husbands---

Mr. Pbrensy. Indeed, nature has been rather partial to your sex in her economy of plants.

Lady Plin. Poor things! What a pity it is they are not endowed with sensibility!

Mr. Pbrensy. I have observed, since the ladies of fashion have applied to the study of botany, they are not only ambitious of rivaling the flowers in beauty, but they have also endeavoured in some degree to rival them in their other prerogatives.

Lady Plin. Take care, Mr. Phrensy; you are growing

growing censorious. (*Enter Sir PEPPER PLIN-LIMMON.*) You cannot imagine, Sir Pepper, how delighted I am with the beautiful and sublime science of botany!

Sir P. Plin. Indeed!

Lady Plin. This learned gentleman has raised, as it were, the veil of nature, and has revealed to me some of her secrets; and I must own, secrets that excite my astonishment. According to the illustrations of this learned professor, the chalice of every flower is a kind of a house of bad fame.

Sir P. Plin. (ironically) Then a lady of your unspotted virtue ought to shrink, as the sensitive-plant, from a study that presents to you nothing but scenes of immorality.

Lady Plin. There can be no harm in gratifying a literary curiosity. But I assure you, Sir Pepper, I shall be apt to think it is not extremely decent to wear a nosegay!

Sir P. Plin. If you would read the delightful poem of the Loves of the Plants, you need not give this gentleman any further trouble. At present I must take the liberty of desiring him to leave us alone, as I have something to communicate to you in private.

Mr. Phrensy. I obey your commands. In our next lecture we will expatiate on the dews that refresh the flowers at night.

(*Exit Mr. PHRENSY.*)

Lady Plin. Well, Sir Pepper, what have you to communicate? Nothing I presume very entertaining?

Sir P. Plin. You now receive a positive order, not to admit that literary fop any more into your study:

Lady Plin. What, Sir Pepper! When the ray of knowledge begins to dawn, must it expire at your uncreating word?

Sir P. Plin. Your Ladyship's metaphorical expressions

pressions have no effect upon me, and give me leave to observe, that I have always found you refractory and uncomplying with any requests.

Lady Plin. How can you be so unjust? Where is the wife throughout Wales that is more complacent? Did I ever refuse to comply with a request of yours, from January to January? Indeed, Sir Pepper, I might complain of the very few indulgences you ever granted me---

Sir P. Plin. Dare you complain of my want of indulgence, when there is not a whim, that I have not always been ready to indulge you in! When the gardening parson from England came to us last year, did I not submit to have the front of my old forest, cicatrised into clumbs like large pies? Did he not fling a confining belt, as he called it, round my place! As if he thought the hills, vales and woods were going to run away! Did I not let him, to please you, zig zag the avenue in such a manner, that I could hardly find the way to my own house?

Lady Plin. You must allow that Plinlimmon Castle, wanted a touch of the modern bard.

Sir P. Plin. Then I was obliged to endure his perpetual panegyric upon himself! How he was admitted to all the great tables in town? How he chose a picture for this Lord---and a fan for that Lady---

Lady Plin. However, his visit was not long, he stayed with us but a little month.

Sir P. Plin. If it had not been for the death of the french cook, he would have been at Plinlimmon Castle at this moment.

Lady Plin. Do you choose to put my patience to any further trial?

Sir P. Plin. Recall, if you please, the physician from the north, who came a practise-hunting into wales, did he not come twice a day to the castle

Castle to brace your nerves; was not this another indulgence? There you passed day after day, languishing on a sofa! Then the room for sooth was darkened. As you could endure only a kind of twilight, which you called *a jour doux*; then I was never to be admitted, because I spoke so loud.

Lady B. The doctor said you was too boisterous, Sir Pepper, for the chamber of a valetudinarian, notwithstanding your incredulity concerning the bad state of my nerves, at that time, I can assure you, that it was to the sofa, and to the doctor, that I owe---

Sir P. Plin. More than you will choose to allow.

Lady Plin. Don't be scurrilous, Sir Pepper.

Sir P. Plin. Then there was the fencible colonel, but I have done. Let me only entreat you not to complain any more of my not granting you any indulgences! Zounds, madam, the Pope at Rome could not have granted you more indulgences than I have. But no more, I have only to beg of you to stay here till I return with some papers for you to sign, and which Lord Melcourt and Mr. Fashion are to witness.

(Exit Sir PEPPER PLINLIMMON.)

Lady Plin. Never was a person of delicate feelings so thrown away as I was when I consented to be the wife of Sir Pepper.

Enter Mr. PHRENSY.

Mr. Phrensy. I watched Sir Pepper out, I heard him go along the gallery muttering, as if he was much displeased, I am afraid he has been endeavouring to ruffle your angelic temper.

Lady Plin. He has absolutely imposed his commands upon me not to receive your visits.

Mr. Phrensy. I rejoice to hear it.

Lady Plin. What do you mean Mr. Phrensy?

c

Mr.

Mr. Phrensy. Prohibition, like a glass of bitters, stimulates the appetite and awakens our partialities: I dare say, I now appear more amiable to your Ladyship than I did before.

Lady Plin. I confess, at least, your presumption does not offend me; but I am sorry to inform you that you must not stay with me at present; Sir Pepper is returning immediately, and Lord Melcourt and Mr. Fashion are coming with him.

Mr. Phrensy. They cannot be here so soon--- Mr Fashion was just now in earnest conversation with Lady Bellair in the long cathedral arbor, and Lord Melcourt was---

Lady Plin. You are mistaken---for I hear them coming! What can be done! It is too late to escape---you must not take refuge in the bed-chamber, my blabbing maid is there---conceal yourself behind this curtain.

(Lets down the curtain that bangs over the bookshelves.)

Mr. Phrensy. (Peeping from behind the curtain.) I cannot at least want entertainment where there are so many books.

Lady Plin. How can you be jocular now? You see the agitation I am in---

Enter Sir PEPPER PLINLIMMON, Lord MELCOURT and Mr. FASHION.

Sir P. Plin. These gentlemen will have the goodness to be witnesses to your signing this paper.

Lord Mel. How does your Ladyship proceed in the study of botany.

Lady Plin. At the desire of Sir Pepper, I have laid aside the thoughts of botany, for the present.

Lord

Lord Mel. It is a pity your Ladyship should not avail yourself of the advantage of being under the same roof with so eminent a professor.

Mr. Fash. A person of your Ladyship's abilities would have made a rapid progress under so skilful a director: he has a way of bringing his scholars forward in a very short time.

Sir P. Plin. He has the way of bringing himself forward in a very short time. Be so good as to sign your name. (*Offering the paper.*) You keep these Gentlemen waiting.

Mr. Fash. I am sure we have nothing better to do than converse with this learned Lady.

Lady Plin. You are very obliging; but I will not any longer intrude on your time.

(*She writes her name---*Then *LORD MELCOURT* and *MR. FASHION* sign.)

Mr. Fash. Pray, Lord Melcourt, have you a Virgil on those shelves behind the curtain? Tombstone and I had a dispute about a passage in the fourth book.

Lord Mel. No! That is a mere lady's library, nothing but moderns---I ran up a few shelves, and furnished them with some every-day volumes for the convenience of any lady who might occupy these apartments.

Lady Plin. Mr. Fashion, there may be a Virgil behind the curtain; but not the Virgil you mean.

Mr. Fash. You allude to the translation; no, that will not do; I want to consult the original.

Lady Plin. Then you must have recourse to the library below.

Lord Mel. But why does your Ladyship drop that curtain over the books?

Lady Plin. I found it hanging, and I make it a rule to leave things exactly as I find them.

Sir P. Plin. The curtain, my dear, I think was up just now, when I was with you.

Lady

Lady Plin. Was it, my dear? I do not recollect---very true, it was: The sun played so powerfully upon the books, I was afraid it would tarnish the beautiful bindings, so I dropt the curtain---

Mr. Fash. I love beautiful bindings, and typographical luxury. Pray let me be favoured with the sight of the books.

Lady Plin. Not worth your inspection---a mere female library, and authors for women.

Lord Mel. Allow me to indulge Fashion's curiosity. As for the sun's spoiling the books, it matters not, when the bindings are the worse for wear, the books may have new bindings; a well-bound book is not like a lady's reputation, which once soiled, can never--- (*Draws up the curtain---discovers Mr. PHRENSY*) There was, indeed, a Virgil behind the curtain!

Mr. Fash. An author for a lady!

Lord Mel. But not so well bound as Fashion expected.

Mr. Phrensy. Gentlemen, you may laugh if you please, but we enterprising fellows are now and then exposed to these untoward discoveries. They are inevitable incidents in the comedy of life. This is an incident---

Sir P. Plin. Arrogant pedant! If this was not Lord Melcourt's house, my cane would chastise your insolence.

Lady Plin. I assure my dear, this gentleman had received my commands not to enter these apartments any more; at that instant I heard you returning.

Mr. Phrensy. And to save you from an object so disagreeable as myself, I secreted myself behind that curtain.

Sir P. Plin. Daring wretch! what is it you mean? Do you presume to make the personal attractions

tractions of that lady the object of your bold pretensions?

Lady Plin. Well, Sir Pepper, since we are among friends, I give you my word, that if ever I could be persuaded to deviate from the path of decorum, and make a little *faux pas*, it should not be with a literary person.

Mr. Fash. Your Ladyship is perfectly right. The literary heroes are not renowned in the annals of gallantry; a bookworm is a poor harmless creature, without a sting,

Sir P. Plin. What you say, Mr. Fashion, is sensible and judicious. I have heard it observed, that a lieutenant of the guards is more formidable to a married man, than the whole body of the antiquarian society. Mr. Tombstone will excuse the warmth I was just now surpris'd into.

Mr. Phrensy. Pray do not mention it. Your prohibition with regard to my coming to this apartment shall be strictly obeyed, and I shall for the future look for the honour of your Ladyship's society only in the drawing-room, which you know is a neutral apartment, and accessible to every part of the family.

Sir P. Plin. Gentlemen, your obedient. I must return with these papers. *(Exit.)*

Lord Mel. Well, this scene has ended much better than I expected. The storm would have fallen heavy upon Tombstone, had it not been for your Ladyship's happy sarcasm upon the gallantry of the learned.

Mr. Phrensy. Your Lordship need not call me Tombstone; her Ladyship knows my story; there is nothing respecting myself that is a secret to her Ladyship.

Lord Mel. I am glad to hear it. But I must beg leave to absent myself; I hope your Ladyship will excuse me.

Lady

Lady Plin. But why will your Lordship deprive us of your company?

Lord Mel. Consider, Madam, I am at the eve of being married---my mind is so full---I have so many things to think of.

Mr. Phrensy. What can your Lordship have to think of? every thing flows so smoothly to your wishes---you have no more occasion to think than a translator.

Mr. Fash. No more he has: and I could undertake to prove that his Lordship is a kind of a translator himself, and even a translator into various languages.

Lord Mel. How do you make that out?

Mr. Fash. I have seen you sometimes in liquor, and then you translate yourself into a beast.

Mr. Phrensy. Very good!

Mr. Fash. You will soon be married, and then you will translate yourself into another kind of animal.

Mr. Phrensy. You mistake, that will not be his own doing.

Mr. Fash. Very true! some intimate friend will do that translation for him.

Lord Mel. Will not your Ladyship take my part against these profane batchelors?

Lady Plin. The arrows these gentlemen shoot are not dipt in gall.

Lord Mel. Nor are their points very keen. But I must be going.

Lady Plin. As the party is breaking up, suppose, Mr. Phrensy, you attend me to the neutral apartment. as you ingeniously term it.

Mr. Phrensy. I am at your command.

(Offers his hand.---Exit with

Lady PLINLIMMON.

Lord Mel. There go two, the most ridiculous personages!

Mr. Fash. And the best suited to one another.

Lord

Lord Mel. I wish my future bride and I were half as well adapted to one another.

Mr. Fash. What! Melcourt, do you feel faint-hearted?

Lord Mel. Faith! I do. The whimsicality of the different persons under this roof, has occasioned some laughing, which has served to divert my attention from the main object. But when my thoughts rest upon my approaching nuptials, my mind shrinks from its purpose.

Mr. Fash. Oh! this is nothing but a vapour fit, a qualm before matrimony; it will pass away.

Lord Mel. Never, never.

Mr. Fash. She is handsome---very rich.

Lord Mel. Did she possess all the barbaric gold of the city, it would not atone for her deficiencies in other respects.

Mr. Fash. What do you call deficiencies? The little rusticities of her homebred education will disappear in time; she will catch the tone of the stage she is entering upon; the continual action of surrounding example in higher life will wear away her peculiarities, and she will insensibly glide into the general mass.

Lord Mel. You are calm and philosophic; but I cannot be cooled and philosophised into the approval of what I am sensible is not strictly honourable; which is leading, and as it were betraying a young woman to the altar, for whom I entertain no passion, no preference, no esteem.

Mr. Fash. Your good nature will prompt you to treat her with civility; her simplicity will explain your politeness into love; and the torrent of amusements in town will prevent her prying into your private pleasure-ground.

Lord Mel. Fashion, you talk it well; but I do protest, if I could be prevailed upon to marry this young woman, disliking her as I do, I should feel an

an internal degradation, that would poison all my days.

Mr. Fash. What can be done? it is too late to recede; the Welch Family will be in an uproar.

Lord Mel. I have a scheme---a lucky thought occurred this morning. I think I have hit upon a method of escaping from the chains I have been forging for myself; and in preparing the girl for the event, I shall contrive to soften her disappointment by a kind of innocent imposition, which will make her believe that the breaking off the intended marriage is her own act.

Mr. Fash. This is at once generous and humane; to ward off the point that would wound her pardonable vanity in the expectation of being Lady Melcourt. But what is your plan?

Lord Mel. That I will communicate to you in a more private place; and if my stratagem should not succeed, I must then have recourse to your superior invention. *(Exeunt.)*

END OF THE THIRD ACT

A C T

A C T IV.

Miss Plin. (*Reading aloud*)---“ Oh! happy state,
when souls each other draw,” (*Enter Lord MEL-*
COURT.) Your calling upon me, when I am alone,
is very kind; I am now convinced, your Lord-
ship has a great regard for me.

Lord Mel. May I take the liberty of asking,
what book has the honor of engaging your atten-
tion?

Miss Plin. I have been dressing my expectation
with love verses. (*Reads*)

“ For thee the spouse, prepares the bridal ring,

“ For thee white virgins hymeneals sing!”---

But what makes you look so grave, when you are
so near being a bridegroom? A little bird sung in
my ear, that to-morrow, is to be the happy day,
and I suppose your Lordship, is come to inform
me of the happy tidings.

Lord Mel. No indeed! I did not come for that
purpose, I came with another view.

Miss Plin. I hope it will not rain to-morrow,
there must not be a speck of a cloud, in the skies,
on our wedding day.

Lord Mel. I must beg your serious attention, to
H what

what I have to say to you (*Takes a chair; offers her one; they sit*)---If I seem a little embarrassed, you will have the goodness to excuse me? I think it my duty, to inform you, that when I was last abroad, I had the misfortune of being introduced to a young Nun who gained my affections, and though that accomplished woman is no more---

Miss Plin. If she is no more, I have nothing to apprehend, for with all her want of accomplishments, Isabella Plinlimmon, must be superior to a dead Nun.

Lord Mel. 'Tis not only that---

Miss Plin. Your Lordship did not fall in love with the whole convent?

Lord Mel. No, no, when I lost my Constantia, my warm affections, flew to her tomb.

Miss Plin. And when your warm affections have caught cold at her tomb, they will fly back again.

Lord Mel. Never, never, with her they have taken up their everlasting residence.

Miss Plin. Well let them; you and I will make new affections.

Lord Mel. (*Aside.*) Nothing will do, she is determined to have me.

Miss Plin. What does your Lordship say?

Lord Mel. I am afraid, Miss Plinlimmon, there are other objectionable circumstances relative to myself; with all the appearance of affability and condescension, I can assure you, that I am most vehemently passionate.

Miss Plin. Matrimony will cure that vice! I have heard my mamma say, that marriage is a great tamer.

Lord Mel. I have also the misfortune of walking in my sleep, and I get out of the window, and walk upon the roof of the house.

Miss Plin. As long as you do not insist upon my walking with you, I do not call that an objectionable circumstance: and when you are tired of
imhaling

inhaling the night breezes from the top of the house, you will find me overjoyed to receive you at your return.

Lord Mel. (*Rising from his chair.*) I see, Miss Plinlimmon, you make a jest of what my delicate feelings prompt me to reveal to you.

Miss Plin. (*Rising.*) Quite the reverse; your candour endears you the more to me; and to return you an equivalent of candour and unreserve, on my part, I will unfold to your Lordship a secret, though I am unwilling to disclose it.

Lord Mel. Well, what have you to communicate?

Miss Plin. 'Tis what you would have found out, if I did not reveal it: but in this charming moment of mutual confidence, I cannot resist telling my love, that I have crooked legs;

Lord Mel. Crooked legs! The devil.

Miss Plin. Do not let such a trifle discompose you: my aunt, Lady Waddle, is made just the same as I am, and she has eleven children.

Lord Mel. If you please, Miss Plinlimmon, we will put an end to this discourse.

Miss Plin. If you desire it. We shall have time enough to talk, when we are man and wife: adieu, I am going to Lady Bellair, and will tell her all that has passed, in this delightful, confidential intercourse.

Lord Mel. I must insist upon your not revealing one word, to Lady Bellair, of what I have been saying to you.

Miss Plin. As you please; your Lordship will find me through life strictly observant of your commands. (*Exit Miss PLINLIMMON.*)

Lord Mel. Were my debts and difficulties, treble to what they are, I would not extricate myself on the condition of marrying that thing! That vile antithesis! Half a wit, and half an idiot. (*Enter Mr. FASHION.*) Oh! Fashion, you never came
so

so opportunely, I am at a loss how to act; my scheme has entirely failed---

Mr. Fash. Then I must be your pilot to steer you through this intricate perplexity.

Lord Mel. Her idiot fondness, increases with what should have excited her disgust.

Mr. Fash. Leave me to construct the means of withdrawing from you this girl's partiality, I presume, I am empowered to say whatever I please.

Lord Mel. You may indulge the utmost latitude; paint me in whatever colours you choose;

Mr. Fash. Well, I will endeavour to do my best for you; I have a good knack, you know, at a caricature.

Lord Mel. But do not make me too ridiculous.

Mr. Fash. Remember, you just now gave me unlimited powers.

Lord Mel. Very true; I resign myself to your judgment; let me appear absurd, fickle, preposterous, any thing, to get rid of this matrimonial engagement.

Mr. Fash. Suppose while I am unwinding her affections and desires from you, I should endeavour to bottom, and twist them round myself?

Lord Mel. What! you marry her? Are you in earnest? Will you quit your free roving pleasure-boat, for the monotonous hulk of matrimony?

Mr. Fash. Her guineas will decorate and enliven the hulk.

Lord Mel. Well, if you can make a proselyte of the girl, you have my full permission, and best wishes; here is my license, which with a change of a name will serve your purpose, and you may get married immediately, without acquainting any of the family of it.

Mr. Fash. I will go, and inform Lady Bellair, of your resolution, and of my project.

Lord Mel. I should be delighted, if the girl was to take a fancy to you---

Mr. Fash. We shall see.

(*Exeunt.*
SCENE

SCENE---*Lady BELLAIR's Apartment.*

Lady BELLAIR---*Miss PLINLIMMON.*

Lady B. What you choose to say in private, is of no consequence; but before company, I must insist upon your never mentioning my husband.

Miss Plin. Then tell me, as we are alone; I long to hear what occasioned the separation between Lord Bellair and you.

Lady B. Restrain this idle curiosity; it does not become---

Miss Plin. Did your husband walk in his sleep? Was he in love with a dead nun?

Lady B. How wildly you talk!

Miss Plin. Not so wildly neither; I know what I know; but I will not tell.

Enter Sir PEPPER PLINLIMMON.

Sir P. Plin. I take the liberty of calling upon your Ladyship to express my uneasiness that the lawyer from town is not yet arrived, the post is come in, and I have no information about him.

Lady B. Delay is the characteristic of his order! When that Gray's Inn slug has crawled over, and covered with his black slime an acre of parchment, we shall see him here.

Miss Plin. But Mr. Taffey, who is to perform the ceremony, is as necessary as the lawyer.

Sir P. Plin. As for Mr. Taffey, I have a letter from him; he will be here this evening.

Miss Plin. Then all is well! (*Rejoicing extravagantly.*---*Enter Lord MELCOURT*) My Lord!
my

my Lord! Taffey will be here this evening, and to-morrow I shall be the fondest of wives!

Lord Mel. Flattering as your expectancy may be to me, I wish you would restrain this inordinate exultation.

Miss. Plin. Well, papa, I will go and pack up my fine cloaths, for I suppose we shall set out for Ireland immediately after the ceremony. I rejoice to think that Taffey will be here this evening!

(*Exit.*)

Lord Mel. (*Aside to Lady BELLAIR*) Was there ever such a Hottentot?

Sir P. Plin. You don't appear, Lord Melcourt, to be struck with the artless manner of my girl.

Lord Mel. I ask your pardon, I am exceedingly struck!

Sir P. Plin. She has a few rusticities adhering to her, all which will drop from her, like dross from gold.

Lord Mel. In the crucible of Lady Bellair's refining conversation.

Sir P. Plin. Very true. I am certain Lady Bellair would perform miracles on my daughter--- if she pleased.

Lady B. But why, Sir Pepper, do you doubt my inclination?

Sir P. Plin. Because you, fine ladies, dislike trouble. I will be bold to say, that in the course of the winter, you never do any thing your inclination, that is to say, your vanity does not prompt you to do.

Lady B. I ask your pardon, Sir Pepper.

Sir P. Plin. Indulge for once an old man's curiosity, and edify me by recording some instances where you act in opposition to the dictates of your inclination.

Lord Mel. This is a perfect challenge.

Lady B. Well, let me recollect. I go every other Sunday, in the early part of the evening to an

an old aunt, who lives at the Antipodes of the fashionable part of the town, and there I retail to her the historic scandal of the fortnight ; and then she reads to me through her green spectacles, out of a folio, a sermon of the last century.

Lord Mel. I hope, Sir Pepper, you will give Lady Bellair some credit for that.

Lady B. Then I go once in the winter to the Ancient Music.

Sir P. Plin. That, I suppose, is a concert performed by the decayed musicians.

Lady B. Not exactly so ; it is, however, a very edifying concert, and composed of those hoary, venerable notes, that in days of yore delighted the ears of Harry the eighth and Anne Bullen, and is now a very suitable recreation for old batchelors, old maids, and emigrant nuns ! But to continue the narrative of my mortified inclination : my carriage every morning makes one of the long procession of coaches that besiege the circulating library in Bond Street.

Sir P. Plin. That denotes your Ladyship's fondness for literature.

Lady B. I beg your pardon, Sir Pepper, literature is my aversion ; I never look into a book, but I cannot avoid calling every morning at the library ; it is a kind of literary tavern, where the waiters are in perpetual demand. A dish of elegant sonnets for Miss Simper ; satires with a poignant sauce for Mrs. Grumble ; a sirloin of history for Lady Sleepless ; a broil'd devil of private anecdote, highly peppered with scandal, for Lady Angelica Worthless. It would amuse you, Sir Pepper, to see these female academics enter the porch of Hookham College, their cheeks, paled by study, a little relieved by a thin stratum of morning rouge. Then you would wonder at the method the learned professors adopt of supplying the impatience of their pupils : for example---one lady
receives

receives the first volume of an author, of which she will never enquire for the second; at the same time she receives the second volume of another author, of which she has not yet an idea of the first.

Sir P. Plin. Give me leave to observe, this vague method of reading must create a kind of chaos, without consistency.

Lady B. Consistency is a vulgar word, we do not admit into our vocabulary; and as for the chaos you disapprove of, I really think there is to be found the whole merit; for this miscellaneous, variegated, unconnected reading, forms the beautiful dove-tailed, mosaic literature of the female mind.

Sir P. Plin. I hope you will allow Lady Plinlimmon to be a brilliant exception to your general description.

Lady B. Most undoubtedly; I have a long list of exceptions. But not to interrupt the narrative of my own memoirs---I am sometimes obliged to mingle with the elegant mob at a sale of pictures.

Sir P. Plin. A sale of pictures must be very improving. You there frequently meet with the works of the old masters.

Lady B. The ladies of fashion do not go to auctions for the sake of the *old* masters; do they, Lord Melcourt?

Lord Mel. No, indeed! A bow from Lord Gauze, a smile from Lord Flimsy, or a compliment from Sir Gossamer Bagatelle, effaces the names of Rembrandt, Corregio, and Vandyke!

Lady B. However, we play with the catalogue, and we stare at the pictures. And I have heard it observed, that in the two late celebrated sales, the love of Vertú made the ladies gaze at some pictures, from which their grand-mammas would have turned away.

Sir P. Plin. Indeed!

Lady

Lady B. But then, I will say for the ladies, that they stole a glance at these pictures, through the medium of their long veils, which you know transmits a kind of drapery, to the paintings! But to proceed, I am under the obligation, sometimes, of getting up in the middle of the night, to be in readiness, to go to a new play, and with all my precaution, I never can get there before the middle of the second act.

Sir P. Plin. That is very unlucky.

Lady B. Not in the least; for I never listen to the play.

Sir P. Plin. But does not your talking loud in the first row, disturb the audience?

Lady B. I never occupy the first row; I place the old ladies, in the first and second row, they have nothing to do, (poor things) but to listen to the play? And then I sit snug on the last form, which we call among ourselves, tattle row, and then perhaps, I am seated between Sir Voluble Prattle, and Colonel Easy, and we three converse and titter *a la fourdine*, the whole evening: but I am afraid I grow dull.

Sir P. Plin. Quite the reverse, I assure you; I presume, your Ladyship pays more attention to the opera; the softness of the Italian language, has something enchanting to a delicate ear.

Lady B. I know nothing of the Italian language, there is no attaining the knowledge of it, without passing through the perplexing, jumbling, cross-roads of a grammar; that would shake my intellects to pieces.

Sir P. Plin. Still the music may flatter the ear, though you do not comprehend the words.

Lady B. I comprehend the music as little as I do the words.

Sir P. Plin. It is, then, the dancing I conclude delights you---

Lady

Lady B. No; the dancing does not particularly interest me; indeed I cannot see the dancing in my box, for I generally sit with my back to the stage.

Sir P. Plin. As neither the music, nor the dancing has any allurements, I suppose your Ladyship seldom or never goes to the opera.

Lady B. I ask your pardon, Sir Pepper, I never omit an opera.

Sir P. Plin. What then can be the attraction? I really see nothing to entice you.

Lady B. Is it nothing, Sir Pepper, to lean half out of one's box; with the head inclined to give the easy feather a more graceful play? which looks a meteor, waving in the air; and which, as the poet says,

“Allures attention, from the tuneful scene;

“Gives fops the flutter, and old maids the spleen.”

Is it nothing, Sir Pepper, to have all the opera glasses levelled at one? To sit in my box, as on a throne, the unrivalled queen of Fopland?

Lord Mel. I must confess, Lady Bellair, you have an extensive dominion; Fopland is a very populous country.

Lady B. So it is, and what is still better, there is not an old man to be found in it.

Sir P. Plin. I am sorry, I am excluded from being one of your majesty's subjects?

Lady B. Out of regard to your gallantry, I will introduce a bill to naturalise you, Sir Pepper, but not to lose the thread of my narrative, I must inform you, that I go once in the winter to an assembly, given by the wife of my physician; there all his pale convalescents stalk about like ghosts:

Lord Mel. And to conclude the description; the lemonade is intentionally made so acid that the doctor is obliged to return all the visits of his company the next day.

Sir

Sir P. Plin. Very good indeed.

Lady B. You perceive what a mortified life I am obliged to lead.

Sir P. Plin. If your historic pencil has drawn a true resemblance, I must confess, a fashionable lady is to me an incomprehensible being. (*Exit.*)

Lady B. Now we have got rid of the ridiculous baronet, I must assume a graver tone; you know, I can be very serious when occasion demands. The more I see of Sir Pepper's absurd daughter, the more I am sensibly affected at the thought of your approaching nuptials. The long train of peculiar distresses incident to our family, I wish not to see terminated by means so unworthy and ignominious.

Lord Mel. I do not comprehend you.

Lady B. By marrying a young woman you are ashamed of; our family has been long involved in various difficulties; it has been known to misfortune, but it has never been acquainted with dishonor? Imagine two large portals opening before you, through one of which, you should be obliged to pass! Imagine one presenting to your view a brilliant perspective, a sun streaming from a summer sky, and illuminating an earthly paradise! The other unfolding to your vision, a lowring atmosphere hanging over a blasted heath. Picture to yourself these words, engraved on the first portal; *they who pass through me, must cast away honor.*---Fancy on the other, you behold this inscription---*This road leads, to honorable poverty;* through which of these arches, would you direct your footsteps? Oh! my dear brother, in the agitation you betray, I read your heroic answer.

Lord Mel. Before you had communicated your sentiments to me, upon this subject, I had made my reflection, and had resolved, but Mr. Fashion, whom I am glad to see, (*Enter FASHION.*) will
best

best unfold the plan we had formed together, I refer you to him, the confusion I am at present under, will excuse my leaving you so abruptly.

(Exit.

Mr. Fash. Heyday, what is the matter with Melcourt? He stalked by me, in dumb shew, like a tragedy hero.

Lady B. The agitation you perceive he is in, is the honest working of nature, it will do him no harm; my brother tells me, you have something to communicate to me.

Mr. Fash. I have, and it is of importance, I was commissioned by him, as he did not choose to speak himself, that he is determined to break off this match.

Lady B. He partly intimated his resolution. But who undertakes to inform the girl of his resolution?

Mr. Fash. That falls to my part in the play.

Lady B. What do you propose saying to the poor girl? How will you open your unpleasant embassy?

Mr. Fash. Not so unpleasant, because I intend to propose myself.

Lady B. Propose yourself!

Mr. Fash. As I do not occupy so high a station in life as Lord Melcourt, I mean, by proposing myself, to be a kind of a parachute, and so break, as it weré, her fall.

Lady B. You are very kind, indeed. You may not perhaps be so invincible in the eyes of the young lady as you are in your own.

Mr. Fash. I rely on your friendly assistance.

Lady B. There you are mistaken. But do not impute my declining to co-operate with you, to a fear that this may be the means of withdrawing your assiduities and attentions from me. I hope I act from a more noble impulse. I am ready to confess that the exclusive preference and predilection

tion you have shewn me of late, have gratified my vanity ; but like the waves that beat against the heedless rock, they have not shook my constancy to the man whose name I bear.

Mr. Fash. The playful gaiety of your disposition led me astray, and I thought you was delighted to return to society unaccompanied by Lord Bell-air.

Lady B. I own I have the appearance of airiness and levity ; but my gaiety is frequently assumed, and I have recourse to dissipation more as a medicine than a feast.

Mr. Fash. As you are so kind as to speak to me in so unreserved a manner, I think it incumbent on me to declare that I have no inbred aversion to the girl. I am not so fastidious, so difficult, as Melcourt ; and I will add, that was I to succeed, I would do every thing in my power to contribute to her happiness, and give me also leave to say that I believe I am not indifferent to her.

Lady B. With such honorable sentiments as you now assure me you entertain, you have my permission to make the trial. Mutual propensity, believe me, is the best security for happiness. The smiling flowers she scatters from her hand can alone enliven the domestic walk ! 'Tis she who displays to the bride and bridegroom that eternal spring which all lovers talk of, but which so few experience ! 'Tis she who gilds and dissipates the clouds of care, and pours upon the soul the cheerful sunshine of the mind.

(*Exeunt.*)

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

A C T V.

Miss PLINLIMMON, sitting at a Table, writing.

I AM glad to find that my letters are finished. I cannot conceive what Mr. Fashion has to say to me in private. These letters will make my friends very happy. (*Enter Mr. FASHION*) You are punctual to your time; I was just thinking of you. Mr. Fashion, you are a personable man---I wonder you are not married.

Mr. Fash. The reason I am not married, is because there is only one Miss Plinlimmon. But give me leave to tell you; that you are too late for the post.

Miss Plin. These letters are not intended for to-day's post, nor to morrow's post; but they are intended for the post the day after the wedding. You must know that I am bound by a solemn promise to write two letters the day after my marriage, and as we shall be on our road to Ireland on that day, and consequently shall have no time to write, I thought it would be a good plan to write beforehand, and date the letters after the wedding,
which

which you see I have done, and have signed myself Isabella Melcourt.

Mr. Fash. Very ingeniously contrived indeed! May I take the liberty of asking who this letter is to?

Miss Plin. It is to Mrs. Evans, an old maiden aunt, who was always very kind to me. There are no secrets, if you please, I will read it to you.

Mr. Fash. I am sure it must be worth hearing if it comes from your pen.

Miss Plin. (reads)

" Dear Aunt,

" Yesterday the holy ceremony was performed. We all wept---Mamma had an hysterical---two beautiful tears stole down the cheek of my amiable Lord, and when he put on the ring his hand trembled"---

Mr. Fash. But, Miss Plinlimmon, allow me to ask, how do you know all this will happen?

Miss Plin. There is always weeping at a wedding, as much as at a funeral.

Mr. Fash. Well, I plead ignorance, for I never assisted at a wedding.

Miss Plin. Then get your white handkerchief ready to-morrow morning. But let me see where I left off--- (reads)

" ---When he put on the ring his hand trembled. After the ceremony, we sat down to a sumptuous collation. We lay at a town whose name I forget. You cannot, dear madam, have any conception of his Lordship's kindness to me.

" I am, dear Aunt,

" Your thrice happy niece,

" ISABELLA MELCOURT.

" *Postscript.* I should have written a longer letter, had I not a bad head-ache."

Mr.

Mr. Fash. But permit me to ask, how do you foresee you will have a bad head-ache?

Miss Plin. I heard my mamma-in-law say that she had a terrible head-ache, the day after she married, so 'tis very probable---

Mr. Fash. I perceive there is another letter; who is honored with this mark of your remembrance?

Miss Plin. This is to Miss Bluehose, member of the female literary society at Carnarvon.

Mr. Fash. With this lady I suppose you assume a higher style.

Miss Plin. I endeavour in this letter to write exactly as Miss Bluehose talks--- (*Reads.*)

“ Sweet Academic Friend,

“ Aurora, yesterday, put on her best sash-
“ fron robe, to assist at our wedding: we are on
“ our road to Ireland, my lord, you know, is a na-
“ tive of that kingdom, what a delightful country
“ must that be, which produces such men? Last
“ night three minutes before twelve, I ascended
“ the expecting couch.

Mr. Fash. Very happy expression that!

Miss Plin. I am glad you are pleased with it, the expecting couch, is in the manner and style of our academic society; but to proceed: (*reads*)
“ History informs us, my dear Miss Bluehose, of the
“ bed of Proustes, of the bed of Ware, of the *Lit*
“ *de Justice*, and of the bed of honor; I wonder that
“ in this learned catalogue, the historian omitted
“ the bed of Hymen.”

Mr. Fash. It is an unpardonable omission, indeed.

Miss Plin. Now we have done with the letters, be so good as to inform me why you look so serious? I begin to think, you envy Lord Melcourt---well, if you do, I will tell you, for your comfort, that if I was to be a widow, and had
moulded

moulted away my black feathers, that is to say, when I had shed my weeds and got rid of my sorrow, I really think you would stand a good chance.

Mr. Fash. You flatter me extremely, but to advert to the subject, which induced me to beg this private audience, I must inform you that nothing but the great respect I entertain for you, could compel me to mention Lord Melcourt, in terms not the most favourable.

Miss Plin. I know what you allude to, but he has promised papa, never to touch a card again.

Mr. Fash. I do not allude to his passion for gaming, I point to quite a different thing.

Miss Plin. I know what you mean there too, he has told me all; he clambers up the roof of the house every night.

Mr. Fash. Clambers up the roof of the house! I can't tell what he has chosen to communicate to you, but I dare say, he has not given you any hint of what my regard for you prompts me to reveal; to keep you no longer in suspense, Melcourt does not love you; I can scarcely suppress my indignation, when I behold so enchanting, so learned, so witty a young lady as Miss Plinlimmon become---

Miss Plin. How kind you are!

Mr. Fash. Become, I say, the dupe of that indigent peer, who only wishes to have his debts paid by your fortune. He will look upon you with no greater sensibility than he does his old banker in the city: he will set you aside, like an useless piece of lumber.

Miss Plin. You petrify me, Mr. Fashion! But I have a resource left; which will prevent my being reduced to an useless piece of lumber.

Mr. Fash. And what is that resource?

Miss Plin. It is a resource which belongs to the rights of women; a curtain lecture.

Mr. Fash. Oh! that will have no effect.

Miss Plin. I know that my mamma-in-law has frequent recourse to that expedient.

Mr. Fash. And what has been her success? Her nocturnal murmurings, and her loud matin song, what have they produced, but an airy, talkative family of bickerings and discontent?

Miss Plin. 'Tis very true.

Mr. Fash. I have frequently been astonished at Lord Melcourt's cold indifference towards you.

Miss Plin. Indeed he has not said one kind word to me since I have been at Melcourt Hall.

Mr. Fash. Then the vehemence of his character---

Miss Plin. He told me himself he was as cross as the devil.

Mr. Fash. Then I have wondered at the contempt with which he presumes to speak of you.

Miss Plin. I dare say he laughs at me behind my back.

Mr. Fash. I have heard him say you are an idiot.

Miss Plin. I an idiot! Did he dare call me an idiot? I, who am one of the female academics at Carnarvon! I an idiot, with whom Miss Bluehose corresponds? I an idiot, who have been electrified, and magnetised! I an idiot, who am acquainted with Mr. Omega, the famous Jew botanist, and have feasted as his house upon his Hebrew roots?

Mr. Fash. Notwithstanding all these credentials of your wit, you find what he says of you.

Miss Plin. I feel the blood of the Plinlimmons rise within me.

Mr. Fash. I should not be surprised, if under the idea of your being an idiot, he should confine you

you in some old castle in Ireland, without allowing you pen, ink or paper, to write to your friend, Miss Bluehose; without having the pleasure of being magnetised; and without ever having the gratification of dining upon Hebrew roots.

Miss Plin. I renounce him from this moment! With this breath (*blows through her fingers*) I blow away all my love! Imagine you see it floating through the air, never to return to Lord Melcourt again!

Mr. Fash. Methinks I behold the fairy chariot bearing away your affections! Oh! that I could arrest the richly freighted vehicle, and seize the invaluable prize.

Miss Plin. Indeed? Are you in earnest?

Mr. Fash. I am, upon my honour!

Miss Plin. Ah! but you are so wild, and you love all the women!

Mr. Fash. I am like other young men, when under no particular engagement; like a bird in the grove, I wing from bough to bough; but once married, I should be as domestic and as constant as the turtle-dove.

Miss Plin. If it be so, I could be almost induced---

Mr. Fash. Come, come, let me seize this coy hand---shew you have a spirit to reward as well as to resent.

Miss Plin. (*laughing*) It would be a good trick to play the Irish peer.

Mr. Fash. The study of my life would be your happiness.

Miss Plin. Are you a gentleman?

Mr. Fash. That you know by my name---and in point of character, I am totally different from Lord Melcourt---I love you passionately.

Miss Plin. That is no unpleasing intelligence.

Mr. Fash. I do not walk in my sleep.

Miss Plin. I am very glad to hear that.

Mr.

Mr. Fash. But no time is to be lost---this license of Lord Melcourt's, with a small change, will serve our purpose.

Miss Plin. Taffey will sow us together in a twinkling.

Mr. Fash. Let us fly to the parson.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE---*Another Apartment.*

Enter Sir PEPPER PLINLIMMON.

Well, if what I am informed of should prove true, that my girl has no inclination to Lord Melcourt, I shall not force her.

Lady Plin. (behind the scenes) Where is Sir Pepper? Where is Sir Pepper?

Sir P. Plin. I hear Lady Plinlimmon's voice---now she is coming to pour upon me, as from a wide mortar-piece.

Enter Lady PLINLIMMON.

Lady Plin. Do you call me a wide mortar-piece, Sir Pepper?---But let that pass---I come to demand your authority over this wayward girl of our's, who pretends to dislike Lord Melcourt, because he is not, forsooth, sentimentally in love with her.

Sir P. Plin. Without mutual affection, there is no living together.

Lady Plin. Have we not lived these fifteen years together.

Sir P. Plin. Yes! and how have we lived?

(*Enter*

Enter Lady BELLAIR.

Lady Plin. I have been gently expostulating with Sir Pepper, on his concurring with Isabella's whimsical objection to Lord Melcourt.

Lady B. I confess I side with Sir Pepper.

Lady Plin. Is it possible!

Lady B. Though the loss is my brother's, I shall not offer a word to reconcile Sir Pepper to an engagement that does not meet with his daughter's approbation.

Lady Plin. I am astonished to hear Lady Bellair encourage a rustic notion that is unknown to the regions of fashion.

Lady B. Your Ladyship must allow that mutual happiness is the end proposed. 'Tis the mark, which if the bride and bridegroom in the higher sphere do not hit, it is because they take a false aim.

Lady Plin. Morality, too!

Lady B. Am not I an instance of the folly of hurrying into an unavoidable engagement?

Lady Plin. Not in the least. Does not the world encircle you with all its attractions? Do you not enjoy the advantages of wedlock, without the incumbrances?---your Lord's title, and a handsome allowance?

Lady B. Your Ladyship forgets that Sir Pepper is present.

Sir P. Plin. I beg she may not be interrupted on my account.

Lady Plin. Give me leave to ask in what manner your Ladyship can be supposed to be a sufferer from your being separated from Lord Bellair? Do your jewels shine less bright? Is the ostrich-feather on your cap less playful? Is the lace---

Sir P. Plin. Zounds! Lady Plinlimmon, your
head

head is like a newspaper after a birth-day---full of nothing but gauzes, foils, and trimmings!

Lady Plin. Well, I stand corrected. I give up the point concerning my daughter, since I find every body is against me.

Enter Lord MELCOURT.

Lord Mel. I am happy to find Lady Plinlimmon here; I am impatient to make this open declaration to her, that the concern I feel in not being allowed to expect the honour of her alliance, is lost in the higher consideration of Miss Plinlimmon's happiness.

Lady Plin. Indeed, my Lord, you are too good, to give way to the absurd objections of an ignorant girl.

Enter Mr. FASHION, and Miss PLINLIMMON, Mr. PHRENSY, and Mr. FANCY.

Mr. FASHION and Miss PLINLIMMON, kneel.

Miss Plin. Dear papa, give me and my husband your blessing.

Sir P. Plin. Your husband?

Lady Plin. Your husband?

Mr. Phrensy. 'Tis even so. I had the honour of giving her away.

Lady Plin. What do you say to this, Lord Melcourt? (*To Mr. FASHION*) Audacious wretch, to steal my daughter.

Lord Mel. I can assure your Ladyship, Fashion is one of the most ancient families in the kingdom, and has a title in obedience.

Lady Plin. Well, if he has a title in obedience.
Sir

Sir P. Plin. But will Lord Melcourt vouch for his character?

Lord Mel. Her Ladyship looks to the gaudy distinction of title; you, sir, look for something more substantial! Then let me tell you that Fashion possesses those titles which virtue's patent only can bestow, honor and integrity.

Sir P. Plin. Then I am satisfied, come Lady Plinlimmon, let us forgive our child, (*Going up to Mr. FASHION and Lady PLINLIMMON.*)

Mr. Phrensy. But who is to reward me for my epithalamium? To whom shall I consign it?

Lord Mel. I will tell you---consign it to the fire-grate, that is the only way to insure it a warm reception.

Mr. Phrensy. Your envy at my talents prompts you to use so pitiful a conceit.

Lord Mel. Well, Phrensy, I will indulge another conceit which will not offend you so much, and that is; I hope as long as you choose to be dead, you will live at Melcourt Hall.

Mr. Phrensy. Egad, Melcourt Hall is so delightful a sepulchre, I do not believe I shall ever wish to be alive again.

Lord Mel. Do you, then, never intend to return to life.

Mr. Phrensy. Yes, I do, as soon as I have, by means of my subscription) completed my poetical loan; my return to life will be a kind of an ovation: the triumphal procession shall begin with my odes, each on his fiery Pegasus; my satires, like tomahawks, shall next appear; then my elegies shall move like a weeping train of female captives, to these shall succeed my epigrams, a brisk troop of archers, with their pointed darts; my grand epic like a large unwieldy elephant, shall march by itself: then my tragedies, attired as widows, shall walk on one side, while my gaily vested comedies shall trip on the other.

Mr.

Mr. Fancy. And a musical band of catcalls shall walk between.

Mr. Phrensy. Base canvass dauber! how dare you interrupt me? when the poet's eye was in a fine Phrensy rolling, when the muse was kindling with conception! vile brush-holder; you do not know the mischief you have done; you have made the muse miscarry; the bright vision is lost for ever---

(Exit Mr. PHRENSY.)

Lady B. (Advancing) Now Phrensy has finished his poetical rhapsody, I beg I may present my congratulations to the bride and bridegroom; I must confess to you, Mr. Fashion, that I little thought the gay irregular comedy of your bachelor life would have terminated with so abrupt and moral a conclusion; as for you, my dear, though I am not to call you sister, you will always be the object of my tender solicitude.

Miss Plin. I am a giddy creature, but I hope I shall never forfeit your protection, I shall leave to others to pursue the varying modes and fopperies of the day; this is the Fashion (*pointing to Fashion*) that I shall adopt, and to this Fashion I shall be ever constant.

Lord Mel. Bravo! Matrimony inspires you, well as it is now, my turn to speak, I beg you will both accept of my best wishes; may happiness lead you through life, along her most smooth and flowry path.

Miss Plin. Well, my lord, since you take my tricking you in such perfect good humour, when I am mistress of my fortune, I will lend you whatever money you stand in need of.

Mr. Fash. (displeased) Lord Melcourt does not want our money, I presume.

Miss Plin. I hope to see your Lordship at our house in the country; I suppose, Mr. Fashion, you have one somewhere.

Lord

Lord Mel. Fashion's country house, I am afraid, is little better than a castle in the air, but till he has one erected upon a more solid foundation, I entreat Mr. and Mrs. Fashion will look upon Melcourt Hall as their own.

Miss Plin. Egad this is handsome: I have one thing more to recommend to your Lordship.

Lord Mel. What are your commands?

Miss Plin. (*half aside*) Be sure you never mention the crooked legs.

Lord Mel. Depend upon my discretion---come, let us all pass some chearful days under this roof; let reproaches and complainings cease, let good humour, social intercourse, pleasantry and content succeed.

END OF THE COMEDY.

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE

BY THE RIGHT HON. FIELD MARSHAL CONWAY,

Spoken by Miss Farren.

WITH gloomy bodings for his bantling play,
Our Author came to me the other day,
A boon to ask, tho' half afraid to break it;
He'd got an Epilogue, and I must speak it.---
All means he fain would try, if not too late,
Still to avert his dread, impending fate.
Sad visions, too, distract his anxious brain;
Rumours of ills, that wait the scribbling train.
'Tis said your taste for Comedy is flown;
That darling child you once were proud to own:
That Shakespear's fires no more your senses rouse;
Congreve and Vanbrugh seldom fill the house;
While childish pageants stuff the crowded scene,
No mortal even guessing what they mean;
Fierce wars they wage, and dreadful battles try,
With bloodless conflict: all one knows not why,
Till by the friendly banners we are told,
There Macedon's, there Persia's chief behold!
Just as on signs th' informing words declare,
This the Red Lion; that is the Black Bear.
Queens, and their maids of honor, wait in vain.
Till their mute lovers shall their suit explain.
They'd often heard, indeed from Greece and Rome,
That

That love was blind ; but ne'er that he was dumb.
 There too those motly, female, manly graces,
 With almost all things naked, but their faces ;
 Those modern Picts, at whom we gaze with wonder ;
 While their keen falchions cut whole ranks afunder.
 Great Rusty-fusti's triumphs thus we greet ;
 Six holy Roman emp'rors breathless at her feet.
 Nor less the neighb'ring temples of Apollo,
 With equal steps the bright example follow.
 There beardless warriors squeak each other's doom ;
 And filken Vandals plan the fall of Rome.
 There demigods by entrechâts advance,
 And Carthage flames demolish'd in a dance.
 Arms clash, loud thunders roar, and chariots rattle ;
 While jarring trumpets animate the battle.

Now critics, if you're angry think on these,
 And spare the bard who strives at least to please :
 Judge, and be judg'd, in anger just, I pray :
Audire alteram partem is fair play.
 In such a cause, altho' the task be hard ;
 I'll be myself of counsel for our bard ;
 I've such authorities as none refuses,
 Fleta's, and Coke's, and Blackstone's of the Muses ;
 Farquhar and Rowe, and Wycherly we boast !
 And Avon's mighty seer, himself a host !

Yet, for I feel my female fears increase,
 Tho' arm'd for war, *yet still I wish* for peace :
 We own your pow'r, confess your wond'rous sway,
 Whom all our great dramatic realms obey :

No

6 EPILOGUE.

No merit we can claim, till you befriend it,
Wit is not wit, unless your taste commend it:
From th' Author's anvil a mere fluggish mass;
Your plaudits stamp the coin, and bid it pass.
By your mild sentence then decide our fate:
Far better to be good than to be great!
Like Britain's Monarch, act your generous parts,
And fix your empire, in our grateful hearts.

FINIS